

Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth District

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Press Release

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Alameda County Commends East Bay Businesses and Nonprofits for Creating Employment Opportunities



Caption: (left to right) Ed Frakes, Board President, St. Vincent de Paul; Melanie Diegel, Community Relations and Marketing Manager, St. Vincent de Paul; Blase Bova, Executive Director, St. Vincent de Paul; Supervisor Keith Carson; Sean Marx, CEO & Co-Founder, Give Something Back.

Oakland, CA – On Tuesday, May 27, Alameda County recognized two businesses and one nonprofit for their leadership and commitment to training and hiring a diverse workforce in Alameda County.

In the first of a series of quarterly events, Supervisor Keith Carson, President of the Board of Supervisors, recognized St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County, Give Something Back and Home of Chicken and Waffles with a ***Let's Work*** decal to display in the window of their business and a board commendation.

The ***Let's Work*** initiative recognizes the importance of a diverse workforce in Alameda County by celebrating employers who demonstrate leadership by hiring individuals with barriers to employment, such as the formerly incarcerated, lower skilled people or those who encounter barriers while receiving CalWORKS.

“As the safety net, the County supports not only the health and safety of our residents but also helps them to find work and become reliable tax payers,” Supervisor Carson said. “Alameda County commends businesses and nonprofits that give a chance to individuals who have paid their debts to society and are now ready to show up on time and participate as productive employees.”

St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County was established in 1938 and serves nearly 800 free meals a day, five days a week, to Oakland’s neediest residents. The facility is also home to a collection of other services, including drop-in centers for men and women, health clinics and employment programs.

The Kitchen of Champions Culinary Training Program and the Transitional Employment Program are both free of charge to the participants and offer on-the-job training supported by workforce readiness classes to help people find living-wage employment. St. Vincent de Paul not only trains participants for future jobs but also hires many of their own graduates to help train the future chefs of Alameda County.

Give Something Back (GSB) is the state’s largest independent office supply company, offering more than 6,000 recycled and green products from calendars to cleaning supplies to recycled paper. The company’s unique business model integrates social responsibility and social benefit. GSB provides rewarding careers for employees and supports communities in which they do business by donating more than half of their company profits to community organizations.

Long before sustainability and corporate responsibility became common buzzwords, co-founders Sean Marx and Mike Hannigan brainstormed a way to merge their business savvy with their desire to give back. For over twenty years, GSB has hired individuals from youth economic partnerships and economic stimulus programs, for example CalWORKS. The company is based in Oakland and employs over 100 individuals. In addition, GSB has donated over \$5 million dollars back to nonprofits across the Western region.

Home of Chicken and Waffles opened in 2004 in Jack London Square and is one of the most popular and successful food restaurants in the county. Derrek Johnson, the owner and president, is an Oakland native who grew up in West Oakland and attended local schools. Mr. Johnson returned to the community in which he grew up to establish his restaurant business and give back by hiring individuals most in need of support: young people returning from prison.

Mr. Johnson provides a loving but firm hand in teaching these young men and women the basic skills they need to survive in today’s workplace and economy. He is currently rallying other small businesses to step up and hire and mentor people returning to the community in order to break the cycle of recidivism. Currently, Home of Chicken and Waffles employs 60 individuals, including mangers, marketing and operations personnel.

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Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson represents the Fifth District, which includes Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and parts of Oakland (North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, Fruitvale, and Dimond District neighborhoods). For more information about District 5 and Supervisor Keith Carson, please call (510) 272-6695 or visit <http://www.acgov.org/carson>